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Budget Process

→ Purpose

The purpose of this section is to provide participants with information and strategies that will lead to the development of a fiscally sound budget for the proposed improvement plan that will allow for its effective and timely implementation.

→ Outcomes

- Participants will be able to implement a process to develop cost-effective budget proposals for improvement activities that will result in the acquisition of necessary resources.

Budget Development

Developing a Cost-Effective Budget

Development of a budget for improvement activities is an ongoing process that begins with the initial steps of resource planning. At that point, however, the focus was on the identification of necessary, available, and currently unavailable resources not on considering their cost. Once all necessary resources are identified, costs can

be attached to them and a budget developed. The budget detail specifies each line-item or expenditure that is expected to be incurred over the course of the improvement plan along with the justification as to why each budgetary item is necessary.

The process of budget development goes hand-in-hand with resource planning. An appropriate budget cannot be developed until one has identified all critical resources, the degree to which they are needed,

which are currently available and can be accessed as in-kind contributions, and those that are not available and will have costs associated with them.

Budget development is a process. Initial estimates of costs tend to vary widely from the actual costs incurred with implementation. As the resource and budget

Scoring Guide- Budget

- ✓ The budget includes only approvable expenses
- ✓ A detailed budget is provided that outlines all expected costs.

development process continues, however, estimates should become more and more accurate. By the time initial implementation begins, the goal is for projected costs to be within 5% of estimated costs.

Below is the list of grant amounts that will be awarded by DESE based upon the enrollment of the school district.

Award Amounts by District Size

Grant Amount	Enrollment
\$75,000	30,000+
\$50,000	15,000-29,999
\$25,000	5,000-14,999
\$17,500	2,500-4,999
\$15,000	0-2,499

Use this information to guide the development of the budget. The budget for all strategies together must add up to no more than the above grant amount.

Budget Detail

Budget detail outlines all expected costs and also provides justification given the scope of work. In developing a budget, it is critical that *all* expected costs be included. This will allow a more accurate estimate of whether improvement activities related to specific objectives can be sustained within the LEA and/or generalized to other LEAs that are unable to make available the same set of resources. However, for

the purposes of the improvement plan DESE allows only budget items to be entered into IMACS that are funds requests.

As a basic template for a budget related to an improvement plan, LEAs can use the same categories employed in resource planning:

- Purchased Services;
- Salaries
- Supplies and Material Resources;

Note: For the Improvement Plan grant applications, DESE suggests that districts structure their budget requests to use the majority of funds for professional development activities. Additionally, funds may not be used to add personnel to a district, although stipends for existing teachers for after school activities or substitutes to allow teachers to attend training are permissible. **Funding for student incentives will be limited to no more than 5% of the total budget and funding for food or meal requests will be capped at 6% of the total budget.**

Purchased Services

Purchased Services refers to those budget items provided or performed by persons with specialized skills and knowledge from outside of the LEA. Included in this budget category are costs of services provided by personnel from other school districts, as well as consultants. Each budget item in this area should include:

- The name of the individual/organization that will provide the support
- A brief explanation of the nature of the service performed (e.g., PBS Training)
- The number of persons for whom the service will be provided
- The amount/extent of the service (e.g., 3- full days or 24 hours of training)
- Total cost of the service

Salaries

Within the salaries section of the budget detail should be included budget items pertaining to the time and effort of individuals employed by the LEA. This includes

supervisory staff, direct service staff (i.e., teachers; paraeducators; substitutes; other professional support personnel). Information should be included with respect to the:

- Exact amount of time that each person will devote to program activities (i.e., number of hours)
- Cost of this effort requested as part of the grant

Note: DESE will not reimburse for salaries for employees. Stipends for existing employees to conduct grant activities outside of regular paid business times are allowable. For example, a stipend to attend training in the summer or to develop Curriculum Based Measurement probes after school hours is permissible.

Supplies and Materials

In this section of the budget the team must detail the exact costs of supplies and materials necessary to carry out the improvement plan. Items in this area of the budget generally include: student incentives, curricula and training materials for staff that need to be purchased, supplemental classroom materials (e.g., computer software, DVDs/CD-ROMs), and evaluation materials. In developing this section of the budget detail the estimate should provide:

- Number of each item that will be purchased
- Cost of each item
- Total cost of all items of that same type.

The Budget Includes Only Approvable Expenses

While most items necessary for improvement activities can be charged to the budget developed by the LEA, there are some items that may not. The easiest way to avoid including non-allowable charges is to carefully review the approvable expenditure object codes. The list of Approvable Expenses is available in the resources section of this manual.